

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2357

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 10999

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, US, UK

SUBJ: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING DR. PUAI UNGPHAKON

1. EMBASSY IS RELIABLY INFORMED THAT DR. PUAI UNGPHAKON, FORMER RECTOR OF THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY IN BANGKOK AND IN SELF-IMPOSED EXILE SINCE MILITARY TAKEOVER OF ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT OCT 6, 1976, HAS BEEN APPOINTED A SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL IN ENGLAND. APPOINTMENT IS FOR ONE YEAR WITH POSSIBILITY OF RENEWAL. UNDER THE ARRANGEMENT HE WILL REPORTEDLY GIVE PUBLIC LECTURES ON UNIVERSITY PREMISES AND WILL GIVE LECTURES AND SEMINARS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS AT BRISTOL.

2. WHILE AT UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL HE WILL REPORTEDLY CONTINUE RESEARCH FOR A BOOK ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON RURAL AREAS. THIS BOOK IS REPORTEDLY NEARING COMPLETION. PUSI WILL ALSO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH FOR A STUDY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WITH REFERENCE TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND POLITICAL DEMORCRACY.

3. EMBASSY IS ALSO RELIABLY INFORMED THAT FORD FOUNDATION IN NEW YORK HAS MADE GRANT OF US DOLS 3000 TO UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL TO SUPPORT DR. PUAI IN HIS POSITION AS SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW. WE ASSUME THAT THIS ONLY PART OF
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HIS COMPENSATION AND THAT UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL WILL PAY BULK OF HIS SALARY. PUAI IS WELL-CONNECTED IN U.K., AND HIS OLD FORCE 136 COMRADES (INCLUDING ADMIRAL MOUNTBATTEN) CAN PROBABLY HELP HIM OUT.

4. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED COPY OF FIRST NUMBER OF THAI-LANGUAGE PUBLICATION ENTITLED THAI FORUM, PUBLISHED IN ENGLAND

BY MITR (FRIEND) THAI TRUST, WHOSE MAILING ADDRESS IS CHAPTER HOUSE, LEVERINGTON, WISBECH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE. FIRST ISSUE, PUBLISHED APPARENTLY IN APR, 1977, LISTS FOL OF- FICERS OF TRUST: DR. PUAI UNGPHAKON, CHAIRMAN; M.R. SAISAWAT THOMPSON (EVIDENTLY THAI WOMAN MARRIED TO BRITISH SUBJ), VICE-CHAIRMAN; MR. FRANCIS CRIPPS (GRANDSON OF SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS WHO HAS HIMSELF WORKED ON VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT IN THAILAND), MEMBER AND TREASURER; MR. TIU BUNNAK, MEMBER AND SECRETARY; AND MR. SULAK SIWARAT, MEMBER AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY. (FOR EMBASSY LONDON; WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S SUBSCRIBING TO PUBLICATION FOR EMBASSY BANGKOK. PLEASE ADVISE US OF SUBSCRIPTION FEE.)

5. OUR INITIAL IMPRESSION IS THAT THAI FORUM IS FAIRLY HIGH-QUALITY PUBLICATION, THOUGH SIMPLE PRINTED BY PHOTO-OFFSET PROCESS. MAJOR ARTICLE ON POLITICAL SITUATION IN THAILAND SINCE OCT MILITARY TAKEOVER IS BEING TRANSLATED AND WILL BE SUBMITTED WHEN AVAILABLE. IT IS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THANIN GOVERNMENT BUT IS OF MUCH BETTER QUALITY THAN ANYTHING SO FAR PRODUCED BY THAI OPPONENTS OF GOVERNMENT LIVING ABROAD.

6. COMMENT: FORD FOUNDATION OFFICE IN BANGKOK HAS NOT RPT NOT SO FAR REFERRED PUBLICLY TO GRANT TO DR. PUAI AND HAS NOT RPT NOT INFORMED EMBASSY THAT GRANT HAS BEEN MADE. HOWEVER, LIKE ALL FORD FOUNDATION GRANTS, FACT IT HAS BEEN APPROVED IS BASICALLY PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND THUS COULD COME TO ATTENTION OF RTG AT ANY TIME. THANIN GOVERNMENT IS HIGHLY SENSITIVE TO STATEMENTS AND ACTIONS OF DR. PUAI, AND MAY CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVE VERY NEGATIVE REACTION IF FACT OF GRANT COME TO ITS ATTENTION.
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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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